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Underperforming Schools Turnaround Guidance Frequently Asked Questions

School Requirement Questions

Question 1: What do Priority schools, who are NOT applying for SIG funding need to do and when?

Answer: Priority schools are required per the ESEA Flexibility Waiver to submit a Priority School Turnaround Plan utilizing the School Performance Plan (SPP) template (using the SPP rubric to guide them) in eNOTE by July 1, 2015 to NDE. In addition, the school will need to address the 8 Priority School Requirements in eNOTE. The SPP template and rubric may be found at the following link:

http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/District_and_School_Performance_Planning_Resources/

Question 2: What are the 8 Priority School Requirements that need to be entered in eNOTE?

Answer: This information can be found in the Underperforming Turnaround Strategy & Process Guidance posted on the NDE website at the following link:

http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/Underperforming_Schools_Support_Resources/

1. School Leadership – Review performance of principal and either replace or demonstrate current principal has the competencies.
2. Effective Teachers – Retain only those teachers determined to be successful based on competencies.
3. Financial Incentives, Flexible Working Conditions, Retaining and Placing Effective Staff – Financial and Other incentives offered to instructional staff to recruit and retain them: examples include, scheduling

options or opportunities for promotion and growth. LEAs are required to ensure most effective teachers and administration are in Priority Schools

4. Instructional Programs based on Student Needs, Identified through Data Analysis and Aligned with Standards – LEA is required to identify a new or revised instructional program for reading, math, science and writing, demonstrating how it is different from previous years. In addition, LEAs must implement 1 or more of the following in order to build capacity to effectively use student data to drive instruction and student interventions: employ a full time data specialist, implement PD for teachers, and/or implement PD for Principals.

5. Increased Learning Time – Extend the learning day for student instruction and the school's master schedule is redesigned to allow for common planning time for teachers.

6. Non-Academic Factors Affecting Student Achievement: Community-Oriented Services – LEAs are required to demonstrate ongoing community review of school's performance. In addition, the school is required to implement 1 or more of the following strategies to provide social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students: PD for family/community engagement staff and/or for entire school staff, conduct an audit of the current level of family/community engagement at the school and address the findings from the audit, and/or provide PD for staff on students with disabilities (SWD), English Language Learners (ELL), and low-income students and the inclusion of their families.

7. Non-Academic Factors Affecting Student Achievement: School Environment – the school must implement 1 or more of the following to ensure a climate that is supportive of student academic and social growth: PBIS, Anti-bullying, Hire specialist in climate and culture, Audit from Center for School Safety and implement recommendations, PD for staff on climate/ culture, and/or PD to build capacity of leadership.

8. Fiscal Resources Support – Budgets for Priority Schools must reflect all available funds for use towards effective implementation of the school plan. For example, funds may include SIG, 1003a, 5-15% set-aside of Title I, Title IIA, Title III, and IDEA.

Question 3: If the specific requirements of Priority Schools cannot be met quickly, what do we need to do to be in compliance with these requirements while we develop a plan for support?

Answer: The first important step is to assess where you are at with meeting these requirements at each school. In the areas that have need for deeper planning and/or more time to establish, then that will need to be communicated within eNOTE where schools will need to address how they are approaching these requirements. For example, it may be that the district has not yet determined the competencies of the principal in that Priority School, but has a plan for getting

that done. Please provide that plan. Then at the mid-year monitoring point, we will check the progress.

Question 4: When will these 8 Priority School Requirements be available in eNOTE?

Answer: May 22, 2015

Question 5: For One-Star and Focus schools, how many interventions must each school choose to implement in their SPP

Answer: Each school must choose to implement one intervention from 4 options:

- Providing strong leadership
- Ensuring teachers are effective
- Strengthening the school instructional program
- Using data to inform instruction

Question 6: Is the intervention requirement for Focus and One Star schools attached in eNOTE as it has been in the past?

Answer: No, the intervention requirement is no longer an attached document, it is built into the SPP template.

School Performance Plan (SPP) and Rubric Questions:

Question 7: Does NDE have (or anticipate having) an updated rubric for the different types of “turnaround plans” they describe?

Answer: No, the rubric is essentially the same for all the schools. The only addition is for the “Intervention” page for Focus and 1 Star schools. In the past, Focus Schools experienced a review of their interventions through a separate attachment. This is now built into the SPP. The updated SPP template and rubric are both posted on the NDE website at the link below:

http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/District_and_School_Performance_Planning_Resources/

Question 8: Per NDE guidance, plans must provide for the time, training, and support needed to build robust professional learning communities – Who will provide this training?

Answer: It is up to the district to determine this, especially if this is selected as an intervention. External providers may be hired to do this. As you are choosing an intervention, districts should look at all of their funding sources available and leverage those funds accordingly.

Question 9: Should the list of various funding resources be outlined in the budget section of the SPP?

Answer: Yes, all funding sources received by the school should be included on the budget page of the SPP. This includes any funding the school may receive to implement English Learner programs or Pre-K programs. Other funding sources would likely include Title I, Part A and IDEA funds.

School Diagnostic Questions

Question 10: Regarding the elements of the school diagnostic process in the guidance document - What is this supposed to look like in the plan?

Answer: This is from our Strategy Overview document, which we are phasing in. The diagnostic process at this point can be met through the NCCAT-S or similar process that has already been done at the school. Page 12 of the guidance document covers this. Also, districts may apply for School Improvement 1003(a) funding to hire an external provider to conduct a robust diagnostic and develop a plan in response to that diagnostic. For the general underperforming schools, many of these items will be phased in, yet for some items, schools should already be doing this

Question 11: Regarding the elements of the school diagnostic process in the guidance – What is this “brief report” required by NDE supposed to contain?

Answer: NDE is also phasing in processes. Guidance will be developed regarding this report.

Question 12: When does NDE anticipate providing the diagnostic and planning tools and processes?

Answer: Many schools already use the NCCAT-S and NDE will have a list of External Providers (first week of June) that districts may want to hire to conduct a diagnostic (it does not have to be NCCAT-S).

Monitoring Questions

Question 13: Progress Monitoring - Who is to coordinate the problem solving meetings, follow-up calls, and 90 day monitoring meetings?

Answer: District leadership will need to address this. The NDE will begin phasing this in and will provide guidance to work with districts on this in the Fall. The expectation is increased district level involvement with their underperforming schools.

Question 14: When does NDE anticipate having a “clearly defined system for escalating problems identified during problem-solving and monitoring meetings”?

Answer: This is also an area that will be worked on over this school year. The NDE will be partnering with school districts in establishing this system. This coming school year will be able to tell us what is challenging, and what works well for schools, districts and the state.

School Leadership Program Questions

Question 15: Are all Underperforming Schools required to address the leadership requirement?

Answer: Yes; some schools are already addressing this; however, this can be phased in if your school is not already doing this. At minimum, schools must begin to plan and budget for this knowing the importance of the leadership role to the turnaround process. Planning will be necessary, as the districts will meet with the principal monthly to coach and mentor him/her through the turnaround process.

Question 16: Who is responsible for the “school leadership program” and implementation of the “90-day Leadership Plan”?

Answer: If you look in the guidance, it states it is the responsibility of the district. The district may decide to hire an external provider or may use district level staff. We have an example template of a 90-day plan that we can share.

Question 17: What are the competencies that a current principal must demonstrate?

Answer: There are established competencies that can be found within districts as well as through external providers. One example of Turnaround Leadership Competencies can be found in the document Behavior Event interview (BEI). If your school district does not have a set competencies already established, plans to implement this should be created.

Question 18: Who will pay for the principals to participate in the leadership program?

Answer: The schools or districts will be responsible for paying for this. Districts will have options in providing a leadership program for its principals. For example, the NDE will be offering a Leadership Network to successful candidates. Also, external providers, hired by the district, may provide a leadership program. Other leadership program options, such as a district-provided Leadership Academy, are also allowed. No matter which Leadership Program avenue a district selects for its principals, the cost of providing the leadership support will be the responsibility of the district.

Data Questions

Question 19: Without the availability of state testing data, what do we use to create measurable goals?

Answer: Do the best you can. Ideally, schools have been using their school plans as a living document and are routinely monitoring and adjusting its implementation based on data through interim assessments or other data sources available to the school. Especially for those schools that have previously been identified as underperforming (e.g., Focus Schools), they should be well positioned to provide an updated plan. For the 2015-16 school year, schools should have the interim assessments from SBAC.

Question 20: There is no direct mention of measurable objectives in this guidance. Are focus schools still required to have MOs for IEP, ELL, and FRL subgroups?

Answer: Yes, that has not changed. Schools need to address the reason they are identified as an underperforming school in their SPP, where MOs are required.

Question 21: Are there requirements for underperforming schools to have measurable objectives (MOs)?

Answer: Yes, all underperforming schools need to have MOs that need to address the reason they are identified as underperforming. So for Priority High Schools it, might include performance and graduation rates.

Question 22: What is the process for revising measurable objectives based on a test that is no longer offered? Without that, we have no comparison data. Does NDE want the schools to focus on any specific measures when revising these objectives?

Answer: You could refocus on other tests like ACT or MAP. In high school, credit recovery could be a new metric and certainly goals regarding graduation rates should be used. Discussing other options with families and school staff would also be an important step in planning.

Funding Questions

Question 23: Can previously funded SIG schools apply for 1003(a) money?

Answer: Yes, all underperforming Title I-served schools, except currently funded SIG schools, may apply for the competitive 1003(a) funds

Question 24: Are there separate application processes for SIG and 1003(a) funds?

Answer: Yes, there are two different funding sources; 1003(a) and 1003(g), both are competitive grants. Each funding source has its own application found on NDE website. 1003(a) applications are due on July 1, 2015 while SIG's anticipated due date is July 31, 2015. (The NDE is still awaiting final approval from USED on the SIG application. Once that is received, the SIG application due date will be adjusted accordingly) Successful applicants will be notified via eNOTE. Both applications can be found at the link below:

http://www.doe.nv.gov/SchoolImprovement/Underperforming_Schools_Support_Resources/

Question 25: If an Underperforming School does not receive funding are they still required to adhere to what was written into their plan?

Answer: Yes, the requirements are not contingent upon funding.

Question 26: How do I apply for 1003(a) funds and when?

Answer: The application is posted on the NDE website with directions and who to contact If you have any questions.

Question 27: Who will be responsible for developing a comprehensive approach to supporting their schools and provide that information to the NDE in ePAGE and eNOTE” –

Answer: This will need to be determined within your district.

External Provider Questions

Question 27: Are the 1003(a) applicants required to hire an external provider?

Answer: With districts increasing and expansive responsibilities, external providers are a viable option for ensuring that necessary support is provided to the applying underperforming schools. In the event a district has the capacity to provide the targeted support (that is aligned to the NDE’s Theory of Action) to its underperforming schools, districts may request funding for this articulated program, district provided program, intervention, approach.

Question 28: When will NDE release the approved external provider list?

Answer: The list will be on the website the first week of June 2015.

Question 29: Who pays for the External Provider services (school or NDE)?

Answer: The school or district would pay for this (for example, through school improvement grant funds, or required set-aside funds) and contract directly with the external provider

Question 30: I want to hire an external provider that is not on the list. How do I do that?

Answer: Guidance on that process will be posted on the website in the beginning of June 2015.

Increased Learning Time Questions

Question 31: Regarding increased learning time- must all priority schools extend the instructional day at the site? Does this step have to be implemented for the 2015-16 school year?

Answer: Extending the instructional day is one option to meet the increased learning time requirement for Priority Schools. However, morning or lunchtime tutoring may be offered as an option as well. This process may be phased in, but a master schedule with planning to address this requirement should begin to occur and be provided in eNOTE. A summary of your plan and target times to implement this should also be included. It is important to point out that SIG funding requirements for increased learning time are more rigorous. So if a Priority School becomes a successful SIG applicant, then the prescribed SIG requirements must be followed.

Question 32: Regarding increased learning time- how do schools deal with teacher contract time and bus schedules?

Answer: See the response above. Districts will need to consider many aspects when planning for this requirement in its Priority Schools. An assessment will need to be made relative to the implementation of this requirement in order to plan for implementation. It will likely require districts to work collaboratively with its teacher representatives to ensure that extended learning time is provided. Likewise, decisions relative to extended learning time will need to consider other impacted areas and partners such as bus schedules and parent/community partners. Collaborative planning will be key in addressing this learning opportunity for students.

Question 33: Must additional learning time be provided for all students or can it be an optional class/program?

Answer: Priority School requirements have more leeway than the more rigorous SIG extended learning time requirements. Innovative and targeted approaches are encouraged in order to meet the overall goal of increased student achievement. It will be critical for extended learning times to target the most needy students. When establishing extended learning times, be sure to develop a program that meets the needs of those students most likely in danger of not meeting academic standards and/or graduation requirements.

Other Questions

Question 34: Can the 2015-16 school year be used as a planning year to set things into motion for the following school year, specifically the retention of teachers based on competencies? Can we treat it as a planning year with plans put in place or in process for the 2016-17 year?

Answer: Schools may spend time planning how to implement the requirements that they are not immediately able to put into place. In the areas that have need for deeper planning and/or more time to establish, then that will need to be communicated within eNOTE. Schools will need to address how they are approaching these requirements. For example, it may be that the district has not yet determined the competencies of the principal in that Priority School, but has a plan for getting that done. Please provide that plan. Then at the mid-year monitoring point, we will check the progress.